

REMARKS

Claims 1-17, 19-33, and 35 are pending in the present application. Claims 18 and 34 have been canceled. Claims 1 and 20 are independent.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's indication that claims 18, 19, 34, and 35 would be allowed if rewritten in independent form including all of the features of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants have accepted the Examiner's determination of allowability. Specifically, the allowable features of claim 18 have been added to independent claim 19. Furthermore, the allowable features of claim 34 have been added to independent claim 20.

Because all of the claims are now clearly in condition for allowance, Applicants earnestly solicit an early indication therefore in the form of a Notice of Allowance.

Art Rejections

Claims 1, 2, 6, 7, 10, 12, 20, 21, 24, 25, and 29 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Eliashberg et al. (USP 5,966,021). Claims 3, 13, 22, and 30 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Eliashberg in view of Hsia et al. (USP 5,870,407). Claim 4 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Eliashberg in view of Boyington (USP 6,175,812). Claims 5 and 23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Eliashberg, Hsia, and further in view of Boyington. Claims 8

and 26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Eliashberg in view of Akram (USP 6,119,255). Claims 9 and 27 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Eliashberg, Akram, and further in view of Schneider et al. (USP 6,137,830). Claims 11 and 28 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Eliashberg in view of Lee et al. (USP 5,907,514). Claims 14-17 and 31-33 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Eliashberg in view of Adams (USP 4,866,714). These rejections, insofar as they pertain to the presently pending claims, are respectfully traversed.

In view of the above incorporation of clearly allowed subject matter into each of the independent claims, these rejections are now rendered moot. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of all of these prior art rejections.

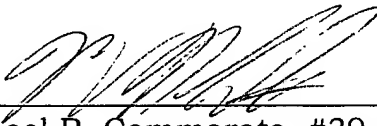
Conclusion

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Michael R. Cammarata (Reg. No. 39,491) at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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By 
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